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The TROOPER

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Colonel Bill Hitchens, Commissioner

Colonel's Corner

September is always one of the busier months for the Georgia State Patrol. Traffic details for football games as well as fairs and festivals call for additional specialized duties from our personnel. The Labor Day holiday period begins the month with traffic estimates of 2,335 crashes, 990 injuries and 19 deaths over the holiday weekend. Last year, 15 people died on the state's roads and 970 people were injured.

This year, troopers will be supplemented with assistance of officers from the Motor Carrier Compliance Division. The additional officers will be patrolling for the first time on a holiday period as part of the Department of Public Safety. The transition of the officers from the former Department of Motor Vehicle Safety to Public Safety has gone well. The merger has been extremely positive and the teamwork between troopers and the MCCD

officers has enhanced the performance of each division.

A word of congratulations to all personnel who helped to make the Southern Governor's Conference a safe and successful one. Troopers provided security for the conference at Reynolds Plantation and secured the perimeter. Everyone involved gave the Georgia State Patrol accolades for the troopers' friendly and helpful demeanor, and their professional security effort.

My sincere thanks to everyone who has volunteered to assist with security duties in Mississippi and Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. Although we haven't been tasked directly, many of you have volunteered and we are prepared to assist our neighboring states if called. The clean-up efforts in those states will be a long, slow process and we stand ready to assist as needed.

Finally, please remember TFC Andy Gideon from the LaFayette post. Andy was seriously injured while on military duty in Baghdad August 30. A roadside bomb exploded and shrapnel hit Andy in the neck, chest, arm and index finger. Surgery will be required by a neurosurgeon in Germany. His rehabilitation will be in the United States. I know I speak for everyone in the Department when I say that our thoughts and prayers will be with Andy and his family and we hope he will have a speedy recovery. As additional information about Andy's status, mailing address, etc., becomes available, we will provide that information to all via e-mail.

A Message from the Lt. Colonel

The Labor Day holiday period is upon us again and marks the end of the summer travel season. With higher gasoline prices in this holiday period, it remains to be seen what effect the price will have on traffic. Traditionally, higher gas prices have not deterred people from taking planned holiday trips.

Leading up to the holiday period Department of Public Safety personnel have joined law enforcement officers across the southeast for Hands Across the Border. I am proud that Georgia is one of the primary states that participates in the educational effort each year. The focus of the event is to encourage people traveling during the holidays to plan their trips carefully, slow down and obey the posted speed limit, and don't drive if you have been consuming alcoholic beverages. It is a message that bears repeating often. The safety message is emphasized through the high visibility show of support from law enforcement officers from adjoining states.

High visibility is also the key to "Operation Zero Tolerance", Georgia's DUI enforcement program. Georgia has noted a slight increase in the number of alcohol related traffic fatalities, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Through campaigns such as Zero Tolerance, we can address the impaired driving problem as a law enforcement community together and employ a "best practices" approach.

Take care and stay safe.



Lt. Colonel Arthur White

Hands Across the Border Encourages Safe Travel During the Holiday Period

The Georgia State Patrol joined with their law enforcement counterparts in neighboring states to encourage safe travel during the upcoming Labor Day holiday travel period. This is the 14th year that State Troopers have participated in the "Hands Across the Border" campaign with law enforcement officers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida and Alabama. During this campaign safety education events were conducted throughout the week.

"The focus of the events is to encourage motorists to slow down, buckle up, and don't drink and drive during their holiday travels," Colonel Bill Hitchens said. Events were held each morning during the week in an effort to promote safe driving. "This is an excellent way for law enforcement officers to show their support for safe travel, especially with one of the heavier-traveled holiday periods rapidly approaching," he said.

"Each year these events are a valuable resource for troopers, police officers and sheriffs' deputies to exchange safety ideas, all with a goal in mind of saving lives," Colonel Hitchens said.



Above: Colonel Hitchens and Capt. M. T. James, Troop G Commander of the North Carolina State Highway Patrol represent the collaboration between the states.

Below: Capt. G. T. Whittaker, Troop J Commander, addresses participants at the GA Welcome Center in Lake Park on I-75 near Valdosta.

Motor Carrier Compliance Officers to Supplement Concentrated Patrols



State Troopers and Motor Carrier Compliance officers will work with local sheriffs' deputies and police officers as part of Operation Zero Tolerance, Georgia's high visibility enforcement program that targets impaired driving. "Sobriety checkpoints and concentrated patrols will be conducted throughout the Labor Day holiday period," he said. The Georgia State Patrol reminds motorists who will be on the roads during the holiday period to plan their trips carefully by allowing ample time to reach their destination, plan for rest stops along the way, obey the posted speed limit, don't drive if you have consumed alcohol, and make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained.

The Labor Day holiday weekend is also an Operation C.A.R.E. holiday period. Operation C.A.R.E., or Combined Accident Reduction

Effort, is a program of the International Association of Chiefs of Police designed to unite the law enforcement community across the United States and Canada in a campaign to reduce traffic deaths through high visibility enforcement and education. The program is now in its 28th year.

The Operation Zero Tolerance campaign introduced its Labor Day kick-off during a press conference held at Turner Field in August. Members of the Georgia State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies were on hand to show their support of and collaboration with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. "Our duty is clear ... locate the impaired drivers and take them off the roads of Georgia before they cause a fatal crash," Lt. Colonel White stated during the press conference. The Labor Day wave of Operation Zero Tolerance began August 19 and will continue through midnight on September 5.

Around Georgia ...

SCRT Members Assist High School Students in Applying Math and Science to Crash Dynamics

On June 29, high school juniors and seniors in the Statesboro area experienced a crash simulation by Sgt. Gailyn Thompson and members of the SCRT Team IV. The simulation demonstrated the impact and damage that occurs when vehicles collide. Sgt. Thompson slammed into a parked car at 30 miles per hour and using safety precautions such as a special neck brace and the deployment of the vehicle's air bag. Immediately after the collision, students along with members of Team IV, surveyed both cars and the crash scene to determine exactly what happened.

The crash simulation was part of the Eagle Quest Summer Institute for Math and Science Education at Georgia Southern University. Each day, students were exposed to real-world math and science applications hoping to encourage them to become math and science teachers.



FBI Honors Post 21 Troopers

TFC Rusty Rankin and TFC Bruce Rowell were honored by the FBI with certificates of appreciation from FBI Director Richard Muller on August 29. Agents from the FBI offices in Augusta and Statesboro presented the certificates. The troopers were instrumental in the apprehension of a federal fugitive on April 4 who was wanted for murder and attempted murder in California. The troopers confronted the man and a fight ensued. During the struggle with troopers, the man was shot and killed by an FBI agent.

FLIR Operators Receive Their Wings



The following troopers received their FLIR wings: S/Tpr. Terry Brown, TFC Jeff Adamson, TFC Steve Langham, TFC James Shirah, TFC Brent Marxsen, Sgt. W. Garret Fiveash, S/Tpr. Kyle Sapp, TFC Steven Newsome, Sgt. Jamie Sullivan and TFC Philip Ponder

Post 38 Retiree Luncheon



Post 38, Rome recently held a retiree luncheon at the post. The event was well attended and a good time was had by all.